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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [ENVR](#) [ASEC](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: MFA PLUGS HIGH-LEVEL MEETING, APPLAUDS IRAQ PLANS

REF: A. SECSTATE 18283  
[1](#)B. 08 LAPAZ 2307

Classified By: A/EcoPol Chief Brian Quigley for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Post delivered demarche on Iraq (reftel A) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and received a generally positive response. Conversation turned quickly to recent House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee hearings on bilateral relations, which MFA representatives used to ask again for a meeting between Presidents Morales and Obama. End summary.

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Iraq's Alright; But What About Obama?  
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[1](#)2. (C) Post delivered demarche (Reftel A) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Yuri Arce, U.S. desk officer, and Maria Estela Mendoza, Chief of American Affairs, March 5. Mendoza said the government "applauded" such actions and would see it as a "very positive" step forward, before adding that they "want to see Iraq assume responsibilities" of self-governance as soon as possible. Mendoza welcomed the opportunity to understand better the details of the Iraq policy, but took the opportunity to stress again the government's desire that all correspondence be provided officially as diplomatic notes (Reftel B).

[1](#)3. (C) Conversation quickly turned to the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee's March 3 hearing on bilateral relations. Although neither Arce nor Mendoza made substantive comments about hearings, both seemed pleased that U.S. attention had turned to Bolivia. Mendoza leveraged Rep. Eliot Engel's (D-New York) call for high-level dialogue to suggest a meeting between President Morales and President Obama at the April 17 to 19 Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain.

[1](#)4. (C) Arce pointedly noted that bilateral relations were still "complex" and said there needed to be more "confidence building" measures. He noted that the July 23 meeting with A/S Shannon had resulted in some good feelings, but that the United States had not responded to the Bolivian MFA's seven-point agenda (reftel). (Note: Some seven weeks after this meeting, President Morales expelled our Ambassador. End

note.) Mendoza added that they had good relations with Shannon and that "he understands the complexities of the situation well." Arce, however, interjected that what the MFA "wanted" was a meeting with President Obama.

¶5. (C) Arce said President Morales would likely travel to the Summit of the Americas with two or three ministers, no more. He added that the choice of ministers "would depend on whom he was meeting with." Arce said, however, that Vice Minister for Social Control (Drug Czar) Filipe Caceres would be part of the delegation, anticipating a high-level meeting with the U.S. along the margins of the Summit of the Americas. "We expect to talk about our narcotics relationship (with the United States)," added Arce. (Note: Our MFA contacts also tell us the MFA is determined for a meeting with President Obama and that any bilateral outreach below the level of Secretary of State might be rebuffed. Septel. End Note.)

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Comment  
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¶6. (C) President Morales' stated desire to have a face-to-face meeting with President Obama has clearly filtered down to the Ministry working level. The concept of building up to such a meeting with a cessation of public attacks and unwarranted expulsions, as a start, does not seem to resonate with the Bolivian MFA. End comment.  
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